



CONGRESSMAN JOHN GARAMENDI

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Contact: Donald Lathbury (202) 570-3178 (Garamendi)

donald.lathbury@mail.house.gov

Rep. Garamendi Introduces His First Bill, Would End New Oil and Natural Gas Leases on West Coast

19 Original Cosponsors Span 3-State Region, Majority of Coast Represented

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman John Garamendi (D-Walnut Creek, CA), who led the fight in California to stop new offshore oil drilling as Lieutenant Governor, today joined 19 original cosponsors in introducing his first bill. The West Coast Ocean Protection Act of 2010, [H.R. 5213](#), would create a permanent ban on new offshore oil and natural gas drilling from platforms in federal waters near California, Oregon, and Washington.

“Exactly six months ago, I entered Congress promising to protect this great nation from threats foreign and domestic. Today I’m fulfilling that promise,” said Rep. Garamendi, a former Deputy U.S. Interior Secretary under President Clinton. “The risk is too great to permit new platform oil and natural gas drilling on the West Coast. Our coastline was well served by a congressional moratorium that helped protect us for 27 years. It’s time we reinstated the ban on new drilling in federal waters near California, Oregon, and Washington.”

The bill currently has 19 original cosponsors, spanning a majority of the coastal regions of California, Oregon, and Washington. Original cosponsors include California representatives Howard Berman, Judy Chu, Sam Farr, Bob Filner, Jane Harman, Barbara Lee, Zoe Lofgren, George Miller, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Adam Schiff, Brad Sherman, Pete Stark, Mike Thompson, and Lynn Woolsey, Oregon representatives Peter DeFazio, Kurt Schrader, David Wu, and Washington representatives Brian Baird and Norman Dicks. Rep. Garamendi expanded on his motivations for introducing the legislation in [this op-ed](#). Quotes from a number of cosponsors and environmental organizations are below.

"The Pacific coastline is one of America's most stunning natural treasures. The beaches of California, Washington and Oregon support vital tourism and fishing industries. It only would only take one offshore drilling disaster to destroy all of that," said **Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune**. "We need to protect our West Coast beaches and the jobs and communities that depend on them. We can't have another BP oil disaster here. It's time to draw a line in the sand. We shouldn't open any new coastlines to offshore drilling."

"Each of us has a stake in the health of the ocean and a responsibility to protect it. Representative Garamendi's *West Coast Ocean Protection Act of 2010* goes a long way toward doing both. From Santa Barbara to Prince William Sound to the Gulf of Mexico, oil spills like BP's Deepwater Horizon rig in the Gulf show that these incidents are not questions of if but when," explained **Dennis Takahashi-Kelso, Ocean Conservancy's** Executive Vice President, who was Alaska Commissioner of Environmental Conservation at the time of the Exxon Valdez spill. "California's coastal economy alone contributes over \$50 billion to the state. This would be put at stake with each and every oil well drilled off the coast. The time for leadership is now and Rep. Garamendi is showing that leadership."

"We are today seeing an ongoing and very loud wake-up call in the Gulf of Mexico that provides compelling evidence that the Congress and three consecutive presidents were absolutely correct in maintaining twenty-seven years of bipartisan protection for America's most sensitive coastal areas, and it is obvious that the time has come to reinstate that protection from offshore drilling and extend it to the fragile Arctic Ocean as well," said **Richard Charter, Defenders of Wildlife's** Senior Policy Advisor for Marine Programs.

"The tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us why the 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara and the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill led to state and federal moratoriums on offshore oil drilling," says **Chad Nelsen, Surfrider Foundation's** Environmental Director. "It's time to stop playing politics with our coasts. We can start by establishing a federal moratorium on oil drilling for California, Oregon and Washington."

"Everyone knows there is little to no recoverable oil off the Oregon coast. And, given the recent disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, it is clearly not worth the risk to drill near Oregon's beaches and fishing grounds," said Rep. **Peter DeFazio** (OR-4), chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. "It is for this reason that I am happy to support this sensible legislation."

"I thank Congressman Garamendi for introducing this important bill," said Rep. **Sam Farr** (CA-17), co-chair of the House Oceans Caucus. "Too many times we've seen the tragic results of offshore drilling, from the 1969 blow-out off the coast of Santa Barbara to the distressing images we're seeing this week from the Gulf. We must protect the fragile coastlands of the West coast, and this bill moves us in that direction."

"My district includes a long stretch of pristine California coastline -- I can imagine the disaster if one of the oil rigs off Santa Barbara blew up, like the one in the Gulf of Mexico," said Rep. **Jane Harman** (CA-36), a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "My enormous sympathies are with the people of Louisiana. And this bill is to make sure the West Coast isn't next."

"Offshore drilling poses too great a risk to our coastal communities, economies, and our ecosystems. This was made painfully clear by the recent British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico," said Congresswoman **Barbara Lee** (CA-9), chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. "The best and most responsible path forward is one in which our coastlines remain free of offshore oil and gas drilling, and our demand for fossil fuels is diminished through the use of renewable energy sources and the

deployment of energy efficient technologies. I am pleased to join with Congressman Garamendi in this effort to protect our coasts against unnecessary drilling.”

“Californians have long supported a ban on offshore oil drilling and we should reinstate it now,” said Rep. **George Miller** (CA-7), chair of the House Education and Labor Committee. “And in offshore areas where drilling is currently allowed, there should not be one new test well or offshore oil drilling permit issued until the American people can be assured that drilling is safe and the cleanup capabilities modern and adequate for the risks associated with this type of activity. Clearly such assurances cannot be given today.”

“As a representative of one of the West Coast’s most scenic coastlines it is essential that I fight to protect it,” said Rep. **Kurt Schrader** (OR-5), chair of the House Small Business Committee’s Subcommittee on Finance and Tax. “Oregon has more than 363 miles of scenic coastline, countless marine wildlife, and an economy which relies heavily on fishing and coastal tourism. Mitigating factors have resulted in the cancellation of fishing seasons and the recent economic downturn has hurt Oregon’s coastal communities. These communities cannot afford an incident like the one that occurred in the Gulf coast.”

“The California Coast is a national treasure,” said Rep. **Pete Stark** (CA-13), chair of the House Ways and Means Committee’s Subcommittee on Energy and Commerce. “It is too environmentally and economically important to put it at-risk for a disaster like we are witnessing along the Gulf Coast.”

“The Deepwater Horizon oil spill has helped to remind people of the stark environmental and economic dangers that oil and gas exploration pose to biologically significant marine habitats,” said Rep. **Lynn Woolsey** (CA-6), co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. “Protecting the Pacific Coast from oil and gas development through a statutory moratorium ensures that the fish we eat, the marine mammals we love, and the beaches we enjoy are all safe from this kind of a catastrophe.”

“Oregonians value the preservation of our coastline to protect our fisheries and ensure that our tourism and recreation industries thrive,” said Rep. **David Wu** (OR-1), chair of the House Science and Technology Committee’s Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation. “Imposing a moratorium on oil drilling along the Pacific coast is a common-sense solution to safeguard our state’s natural beauty and off-shore waters.”

“The ‘drill, baby, drill’ crowd has insisted for years that oil drilling from offshore platforms is safe and clean. The millions of Americans who live along the Gulf Coast would now beg to differ,” added Rep. **Garamendi** (CA-10), a member of the House Science and Technology Committee. “If a similar calamity occurred in federal waters in Southern California, we would see an oil slick spanning the coast from Long Beach to Santa Barbara. That is unacceptable.”

Rep. Garamendi is a long established leader in the fight against platform offshore oil drilling. In January 2009, then-Lieutenant Governor, in a two-to-one decision at the California State Lands Commission, voted to block new drilling at the PXP platform off the coast of Santa Barbara. During an attempt to bypass the longstanding independent authority of the State Lands Commission, Garamendi led the fight

to stop what would have been the first new offshore oil drilling lease in more than four decades in California. The California Assembly ultimately defeated the Governor's proposal by a 28-43 vote. Although President Obama has established a temporary administrative moratorium, the West Coast is unprotected on a congressional level.

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